

Amendment to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions and listings of claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for providing automated call acknowledgement services over a communications network, comprising:

storing addresses including a phone number and a text address for a calling device in a database;

mapping the phone number for the calling device to the text address of the calling device in the database;

receiving a data request from a call-receiving device to acknowledge an incoming call from [[a]] the calling device, the data request including a pre-defined acknowledgement message type, one of the addresses identified with the incoming call, and a mode of transmitting a pre-defined acknowledge message selected by the call-receiving device;

determining a communication mode of the incoming call, the communication mode being one of a voice communication and a data communication;

comparing the communication mode of the incoming call with the mode selected for transmitting the pre-defined acknowledge message by the call-receiving device;

if the communication mode of the incoming call does not match the mode selected for the pre-defined acknowledge message, retrieving an address from the database that is mapped to an address identified in the communication mode of the incoming call, and which also conforms to the communication mode selected by the call-receiving device;

retrieving a pre-defined acknowledgement message from a database, the pre-defined acknowledgement message corresponding to the pre-defined acknowledgement message type;

formatting the pre-defined acknowledge message to include one of: the address identified in the incoming call when the communication mode of the incoming call matches the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message selected by the call-receiving

device, and the address retrieved from the database when the communication mode of the incoming call does not match the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message selected by the call-receiving device;

sending the pre-defined acknowledgement message to the calling device via the address corresponding to the selected mode of transmission; and

sending the incoming call to a voicemail system of the call-receiving device;

wherein the sending an acknowledgement message to the calling device is implemented in lieu of answering the incoming call.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the selected mode of transmission is a data communication, and sending [[an]] the pre-defined acknowledgement message includes transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message in text form.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the selected mode of transmission is a voice communication, and sending [[an]] the pre-defined acknowledgement message includes transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message in voice form.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the pre-defined acknowledgement message is created by a user of the automated call acknowledgement services.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3, further comprising creating a call request, the call request including:

a phone number for [[a]] the calling device-party;

a phone number for the call-receiving device; and

the pre-defined acknowledgement message converted into voice format.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

storing [[a]] the message type;

storing [[a]] the pre-defined acknowledgement message; and

mapping the message type to the pre-defined acknowledgement message operable for linking pre-defined acknowledgement messages to message types displayed on the call-receiving device and retrieving associated pre-defined acknowledgement messages from storage for transmission to the calling device.

8. (Currently amended) A system for providing automated call acknowledgement services over a communications network, comprising:

a computer processor device; and

~~a call-receiving device receiving a call from a calling device;~~

——an automated call acknowledgement service executing on [[a]] serverthe computer processor device, the automated call acknowledgement service in communication with a [[the]] call-receiving device and a [[the]] calling device, the automated call acknowledgement service implementing:

storing addresses including a phone number and a text address for a calling device in a database;

mapping the phone number for the calling device to the text address of the calling device in the database;

receiving a data request from a call-receiving device to acknowledge an incoming call from the calling device, the data request including a pre-defined acknowledgement message type, one of the addresses identified with the incoming call, and a mode of transmitting a pre-defined acknowledge message selected by the call-receiving device;

determining a communication mode of the incoming call, the communication mode being one of a voice communication and a data communication;

comparing the communication mode of the incoming call with the mode selected for transmitting the pre-defined acknowledge message by the call-receiving device;

if the communication mode of the incoming call does not match the mode selected for the pre-defined acknowledge message, retrieving an address from the database that is mapped to an address identified in the communication mode of the incoming call, and which also conforms to the communication mode selected by the call-receiving device;

retrieving a pre-defined acknowledgement message from a database, the pre-defined acknowledgement message corresponding to the pre-defined acknowledgement message type;

formatting the pre-defined acknowledge message to include one of: the address identified in the incoming call when the communication mode of the incoming call matches the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message selected by the call-receiving device, and the address retrieved from the database when the communication mode of the incoming call does not match the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message selected by the call-receiving device;

sending the pre-defined acknowledgement message to the calling device via the address corresponding to the selected mode of transmission; and

sending the incoming call to a voicemail system of the call-receiving device;

wherein the sending an acknowledgement message to the calling device is implemented in lieu of answering the incoming call;

wherein the call request includes a delay field operable for preventing premature transmission of the pre-defined acknowledgement message to the calling device to allow time for a caller of the calling device to complete a voicemail message at the voicemail system of the call-receiving device.;

—— a data request; and

—— a pre-defined acknowledgement message generated by the automated call

acknowledgement service;

wherein the pre-defined acknowledgement message is sent to the calling device in lieu of answering the incoming call, and the call is sent to a voicemail system of the call receiving device.

9. (Currently amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the selected mode of transmission is a data communication, and sending the pre-defined acknowledgement message includes transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message in text form. ~~further comprising:~~

~~a calling customer profile database in communication with the automated call acknowledgement service, the calling customer profile database storing:~~

~~text addresses for calling parties; and~~

~~phone numbers for calling parties, the phone numbers mapped to corresponding text addresses.~~

10. (Currently amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the selected mode of transmission is a voice communication, and sending the pre-defined acknowledgement message includes transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message in voice form. ~~further comprising:~~

~~a called customer profile database in communication with the automated call acknowledgement service, the called customer profile database storing:~~

~~personal data of call receiving parties associated with the call receiving devices, the personal data including phone numbers of the call receiving parties; and~~

~~pre-defined acknowledgement messages associated with message type options, the pre-defined acknowledgement messages mapped to corresponding message type options.~~

11. (Currently amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the pre-defined acknowledgement message is created by a user of the automated call acknowledgement services. ~~wherein the voice/text indicator selection includes an option operable for sending an acknowledgement message in at least one of a voice format and a text format, the voice/text indicator selection being selectable by a user on the call receiving device.~~

12. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~[[8]]~~ 10, wherein the automated call acknowledgement service ~~further comprising~~ implements creating a call request, the call request including:

a phone number for the calling device;

a phone number for the call-receiving device; and

the pre-defined acknowledgement message converted into voice format ~~a call request operable for initiating a text-to-voice conversion of a pre-defined acknowledgement message.~~

13. (Currently amended) The system of claim 12, wherein the automated call acknowledgement service further implements:

storing the message type;

storing the pre-defined acknowledgement message; and

mapping the message type to the pre-defined acknowledgement message operable for linking pre-defined acknowledgement messages to message types displayed on the call-receiving device and retrieving associated pre-defined acknowledgement messages from storage for transmission to the calling device ~~wherein the call request includes a delay field operable for preventing premature transmission of the pre-defined acknowledgement message to the calling device to allow time for a caller of the calling device to complete a voicemail message at the voicemail system of the call-receiving device.~~

14. (Currently amended) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for providing automated call acknowledgement services over a communications network, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method, comprising:

storing addresses including a phone number and a text address for a calling device in a database;

mapping the phone number for the calling device to the text address of the calling device

in the database;

receiving a data request from a call-receiving device to acknowledge an incoming call from [[a]] the calling device, the data request including a pre-defined acknowledgement message type, one of the addresses identified with the incoming call, and a mode of transmitting a pre-defined acknowledge message selected by the call-receiving device;

determining a communication mode of the incoming call, the communication mode being one of a voice communication and a data communication;

comparing the communication mode of the incoming call with the mode selected for transmitting the pre-defined acknowledge message by the call-receiving device;

if the communication mode of the incoming call does not match the mode selected for the pre-defined acknowledge message, retrieving an address from the database that is mapped to an address identified in the communication mode of the incoming call, and which also conforms to the communication mode selected by the call-receiving device;

retrieving a pre-defined acknowledgement message from a database, the pre-defined acknowledgement message corresponding to the pre-defined acknowledgement message type;

formatting the pre-defined acknowledge message to include one of: the address identified in the incoming call when the communication mode of the incoming call matches the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message selected by the call-receiving device, and the address retrieved from the database when the communication mode of the incoming call does not match the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message selected by the call-receiving device;

sending the pre-defined acknowledgement message to the calling device via the address corresponding to the selected mode of transmission; and

sending the incoming call to a voicemail system of the call-receiving device;

wherein the sending an acknowledgement message to the calling device is implemented in

lieu of answering the incoming call.

15. (Currently amended) The storage medium of claim 14, wherein the selected mode of transmission is a data communication, and sending [[an]] the pre-defined acknowledgement message includes transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message in text form.

16. (Currently amended) The storage medium of claim 14, wherein the selected mode of transmission is a voice communication, and sending [[an]] the pre-defined acknowledgement message includes transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message in voice form.

17. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 14, wherein the pre-defined acknowledgement message is created by a user of the automated call acknowledgement services.

18. (Currently amended) The storage medium of claim 16, further comprising instructions for causing the computer to create a call request, the call request including:

a phone number for [[a]] the calling deviceparty;

a phone number for the call-receiving device; and

the pre-defined acknowledgement message converted into voice format.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) The storage medium of claim 14, further comprising instructions for causing the computer to implement:

storing [[a]] the message type;

storing [[a]] the pre-defined acknowledgement message; and

mapping the message type to the pre-defined acknowledgement message operable for linking pre-defined acknowledgement messages to message types displayed on the call-receiving device and retrieving associated pre-defined acknowledgement messages from storage for transmission to the calling device.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the data request includes:

- a phone number for the call-receiving device;
- at least one of a phone number and text address for the calling device;
- ~~a message type; and~~
- a voice/text indicator selection representing the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message.

22. (Currently amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the data request includes:

- a phone number for the call-receiving device;
- at least one of a phone number and text address for the calling device;
- ~~a message type; and~~
- a voice/text indicator selection representing the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message.

23. (Currently amended) The storage medium of claim 14, wherein the data request includes:

- a phone number for the call-receiving device;
- at least one of a phone number and text address for the calling device;
- ~~a message type; and~~
- a voice/text indicator selection representing the selected mode of transmitting the pre-defined acknowledgement message.